

BULL CUP

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to a drinking cup assembly that is convertible into a
5 bullhorn. Specifically, the invention relates to a drinking or beverage cup having a base
separation apparatus to easily remove the base of the cup that is better suited for
inexpensive or disposable cups and the like.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In a variety of situations, it is desirable to amplify the human speaking voice. The
10 two most common types of portable amplification instruments are megaphones and
bullhorns. With either instrument, a user can amplify their voice and cheer for an
individual or team. While both of these devices are useful for voice amplification, they
require the user to transport them to and from the event.

Frequently at sporting events, individuals in attendance are able to purchase
15 beverages in wax coated paper cups that typically include displays or indicia, such as
team logos, or other symbols representative of the event. The cups often made from a
rolled paper portion with a base portion glued into the bottom and sealed using a sealant
material such as wax.

U.S. Patent No. 5,501,103 discloses an apparatus, which is convertible from a
20 container such as a drinking cup, into a megaphone, and thereafter back to a container.
The described apparatus includes four main components; namely, a hollow body portion,
an integral coaster portion, a resealable plug and a cap. The hollow body portion, which
has a substantially conical shape, includes a first end having a porthole and a second end,

which includes an enlarged opening, which is defined by the circumference of the pouring lip. The first end of the body portion located along the porthole includes threads for receiving the plug portion. The plug portion is designed to fit snugly within the porthole of the body portion, thus making it possible to utilize the apparatus as a
5 container for objects such as liquid refreshments. The plug includes radial, outwardly-extending threads, which mate with threads on the inner surface of the body portion proximate to the porthole. The plug is inserted through the bottom of the hollow coaster and screwed into the porthole.

Due to its complexity, the apparatus described in U.S. Patent No. 5,501,363 is
10 relatively expensive to manufacture, and therefore not well suited for mass distribution, or in disposable form, as is the cup of the present invention. The cup is described therein as a reusable "souvenir" cup. Thus, it would most likely be of a type for which participants at a sporting event pay a premium, or that would only be offered as a special promotion (i.e., "souvenir cup night").

15 Heretofore, there has been no reasonably inexpensive means to combine a cup with a voice amplification device in a way that would be better suited for regular or disposable distribution with beverages at sporting events, and the like. The bullhorn cup of the present invention provides such a means.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

20 The invention is a beverage cup or container that is convertible to a bullhorn device. The cup is preferably made of a disposable material, such as paper or molded plastic. The cup has a hollow body portion, shaped to form a cylinder or cone, with an open first end, and a second end located distal from the first end. The second end has a

removable base portion. The removable base portion may comprise a detachable base mated to the body portion to form a seal.

The seal may incorporate a separation apparatus that can be actuated to separate the base portion from the body portion. For example, the separation apparatus may be a
5 pull string made out of string material, thin paper or plastic, that is disposed between the removable base portion and the body portion. The pull string can be pulled from in between the removable base portion and the body portion to break the seal and to release the base portion from the body portion, thereby opening the second end. One end of the pull string preferably has a small protrusion outside the base portion and second end of
10 the body portion so that it can be grasped and pulled to aid in the string's removal. The resulting cylindrical shape, or cone shape (wherein the first end may be wider than the second end), formed by the body portion, together with the open first end, and now open second end, forms the bullhorn that has been converted from the beverage cup.

The body portion has an inside and an outside, and may further comprise handles
15 folded against the outside of the body portion, wherein the handles can be unfolded for use in holding the container during either drinking from the cup or during use as a bullhorn.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention will be better understood with reference to the following drawings,
20 in which:

Fig. 1 is a top view of the bullhorn cup;

Fig. 2 is a top isometric left hand view of the bullhorn cup having unfolded handles;

Fig. 3 is a rear view of the bullhorn cup showing the unfolded handles;

Fig. 4 is a left hand view of bullhorn cup and with the handles unfolded;

Fig. 5 is a bottom view of the bullhorn cup with folded handles formed against the outside of the body portion of the bullhorn cup, with a protruding portion of a tear-out or pull string shown as when the bottom or base portion is in place before removal;

Fig. 6 is a top isometric left hand view of the bullhorn cup, with the handles shown still folded as formed around the outside of the body portion;

Fig. 7 is a rear view of the bullhorn cup with the handles shown still folded around the outside of the body portion;

Fig. 8 is a left hand view of the bullhorn cup, with the handles shown folded around the outside of the body portion;

Fig. 9 is a bottom view of the bullhorn cup, with the handles shown folded around the outside of the body portion, and with the pull string still attached to bottom or base portion still inserted in the body portion; and

Fig. 10 is a bottom isometric left hand view of the bullhorn cup, with the handles shown folded around the outside of the body portion, with the pull string shown removed from bottom after being pulled to remove the base portion.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

With reference to Fig. 1, a top view of the bullhorn cup 1 is shown. The cup 1 comprises a beverage cup that is convertible to a bullhorn device. The cup 1 is preferably made of a disposable material, such as paper or molded plastic.

The bullhorn cup 1 has handles 3, which are stored in a folded position against the cup 1, when not in use. The handles 3 are shown in Fig. 1 in the unfolded position.

Fig. 2 is a top isometric left hand view of the bullhorn cup 1 having unfolded handles 3. The cup has a hollow body portion 2, having an inside, and an outside, shaped to form a cylinder, or cone, with an open first end 10, and a second end 12 that is closed before removal of a base portion disposed in the body portion 2 at the second end 12.

5 Fig. 3 is a rear view of the bullhorn cup 1 having the first end 10 and the second end 12. The handles 3 are shown unfolded from the body portion 2.

Fig. 4 is a left hand view of bullhorn cup 1, having the first end 10 and the second end 12. The handles 3 are shown unfolded from the body portion 2.

Fig. 5 is a bottom view of the bullhorn cup 1, with handles 3 folded against the
10 outside of the body portion 2. A bottom or base portion 5 is in place within the inside portion of the second end 12 of the body portion 2. A protruding portion of a tear-out, or pull, string 4 is shown that can be grasped to facilitate removal to thereby cause separation of the base portion 5 from the body portion 2. The pull string 4 is may be integrated or form part of the seal, and can be made out of string material, thin paper or
15 plastic, which depend on the material used to manufacture the bullhorn cup 1.

Fig. 6 is a top isometric left hand view of the bullhorn cup 1 having a cylindrical body portion 2, which has the first end 10 and the second end 12, wherein the first end 10 may be wider than the second end 12 to form a funnel shape typical of beverage containers. In Fig. 6, the handles 3 are shown in the folded position.

20 Fig. 7 is a rear view of the bullhorn cup 1, having a first end 10 and second end 12, with the handles 3 shown still folded around the outside of the body portion 2. A crease 6, at four locations on the body portion 2 facilitates folding and unfolding of the handle 3.

Fig. 8 is a left hand view of the bullhorn cup 1, with the body portion 2 having the first end 10 and the second end 12. In Fig. 8, the handles 3 are shown still folded around the outside of the body portion 2.

Fig. 9 is a bottom view, showing the second end 12, of the bullhorn cup 1, with the handles 3 shown folded around the outside of the body portion 2, and with the pull string 4 still inserted between the bottom or base portion 5 and the body portion 2. One end of the pull string 4 preferably has a small protrusion outside the base portion 5 and second end 12 of the body portion 2 so that it can be grasped and pulled to aid in the removal of the string 4.

Fig. 10 is a bottom isometric left hand view of the bullhorn cup 1 showing the body 2 having the first end 10 and the second end 12. The handles 3 are shown in the folded position around the outside of the body portion 2. The pull string 4 is shown having been pulled and thereby removed from in between the base portion 5 and the inside of the body portion 2. The act of pulling the pull string 4 facilitates separation of the base portion 5 from the second end 12 of the body portion 2, which opens the second end 12 so that the cup 1 can be used as a bullhorn.

In this regard, the removable base portion 5 comprises a detachable base mated to the body portion 2 to form a seal. The pull string 4 is integrated into the seal in such a way that pulling of the pull string 4 causes the seal to be broken, and the base portion 5 to be detached from the body portion 2. The resulting cylindrical or cone shape formed by the body portion 2, together with the open first end 10, and now open second end 12, forms the bullhorn that has been converted from the beverage cup 1.

Also shown in Fig. 10 are two alternative shapes, 6 and 7, that can be carved out from the base portion 5. With the alternative shapes, 6 and 7, the pull string is not disposed between the base portion 5 and the body portion 2, but is used to separate a pre-cut shape from the base portion 5 when pulled. In Fig. 10, one alternative shape 6 is
5 circular, and another alternative shape 7 is oval.

While there has been shown preferred embodiments of the present invention, those skilled in the art will further appreciate that the present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the spirit of central attributes thereof. All such variations and modifications are intended to be within the scope of this invention as
10 defined by the appended claims.